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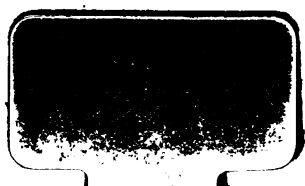
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THE COMFORTS OF GOD

OR  
THOUGHTS FOR MOURNERS

WITH PREFACE BY

E. M. HOLLAND







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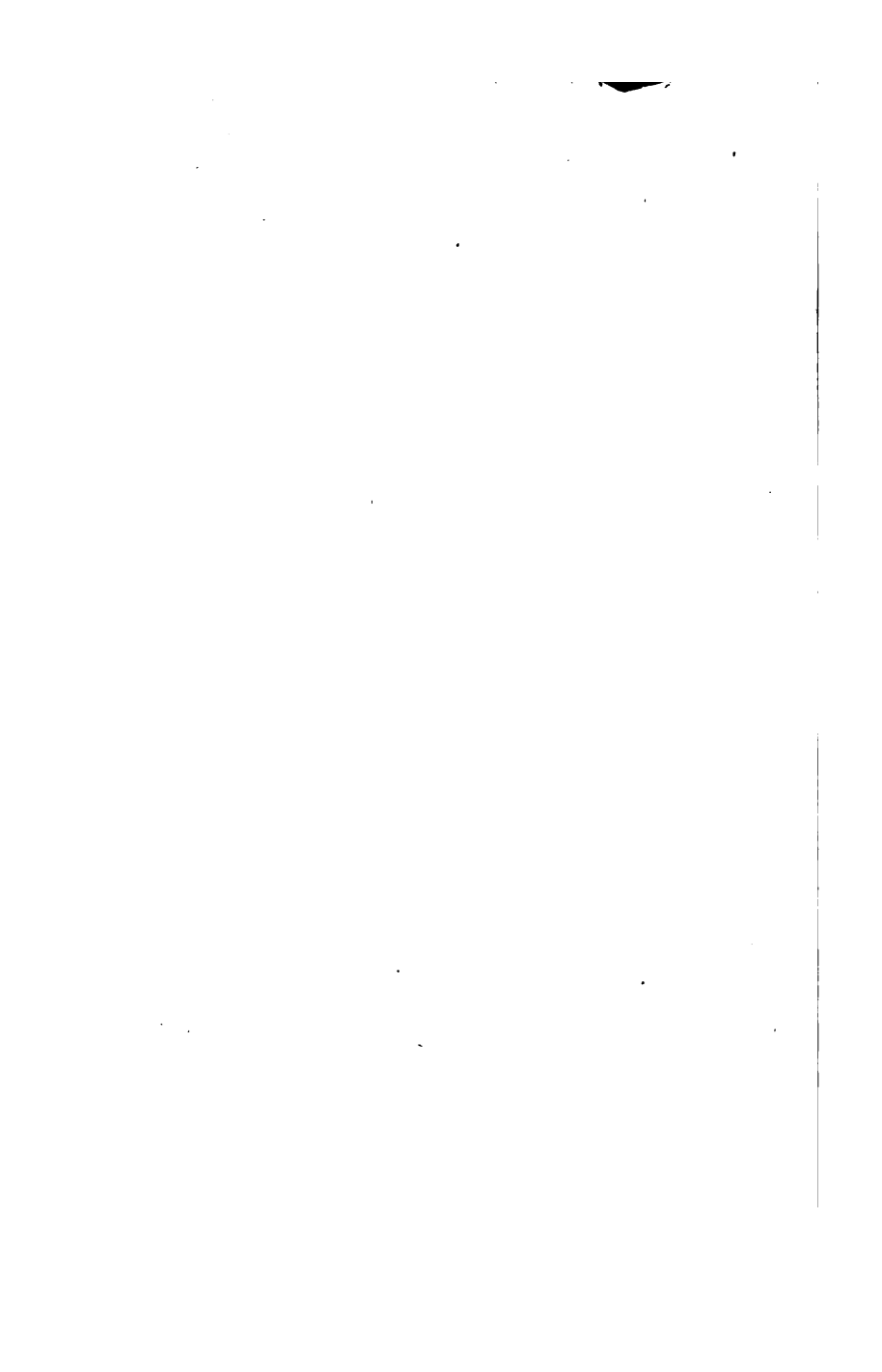
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# **"COMFORTED OF GOD"**

***Thoughts for Mourners***



# “Comforted of God”

## THOUGHTS FOR MOURNERS

BY

L. C. S.

### With a Preface

BY

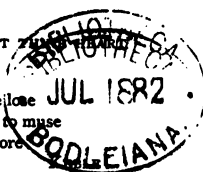
THE VERY REV. EDWARD MEYRICK GOULBURN, D.D.

DEAN OF NORWICH

“BE STRONG, AND HE SHALL COMFORT THEE.”

*Psalms xxvii. 16*

“Tis sweet, as year by year we lose  
Friends out of sight, in Faith to muse  
How grows in Paradise our store



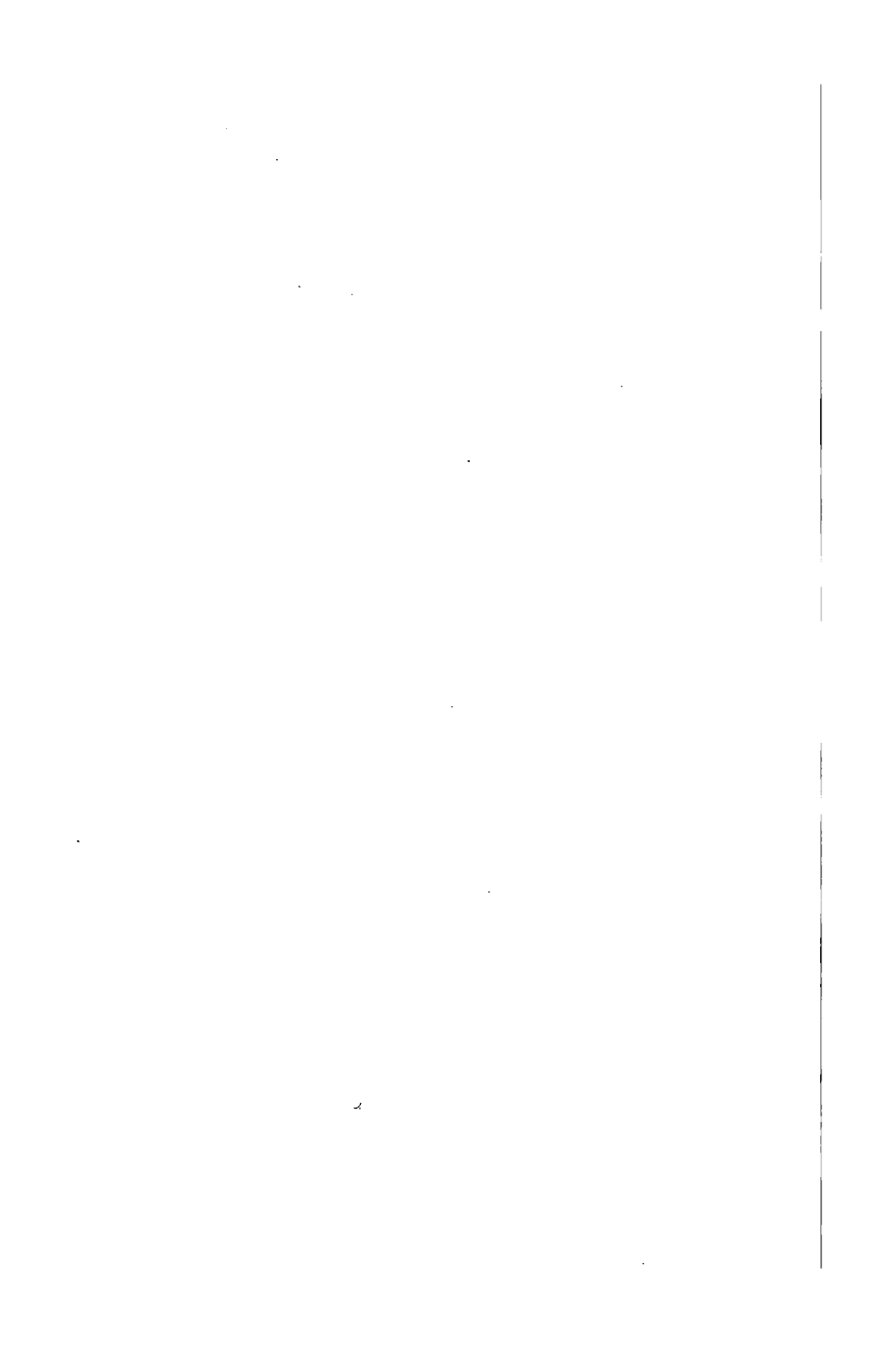
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# **Dedication**

TO

THE SWEET MEMORY OF THOSE DEAR TO ME

WHO ARE GONE TO THEIR REST

**This little book**

IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED

L. C. S.



## PREFACE

THE writer of this little Manual has, I think, touched with great adroitness, in the different sections of it, the various chords of feeling which are awakened by a trying bereavement. The two main points on which our thoughts turn under such circumstances are, the present condition of the deceased (on the hypothesis that he has departed this life in God's faith and fear), and our relations to him, once so intimate and near, now apparently so ruptured and remote.

The first of these points is touched upon in chap. viii. No doubt, as is there intimated, we are left in great darkness on the subject of the state of the blessed dead, and *for wise and good reasons*. Perhaps, however, hardly enough is made of the consolatory intimations given by the word "Paradise," as denoting their abode. The earthly paradise was a fair garden, adorned with foliage of every hue, overhung by a rich profusion of

fruits, and watered by a noble river noiselessly gliding through it (Gen. ii. 8-10); and this is the imagery under which we are led to think of the heavenly paradise, with its "green pastures" and "waters of comfort," by whose margin the good Shepherd leads the sheep, weary and wayworn with the pilgrimage of life, and "maketh" them "to lie down." (Psalm xxiii. 2-4.) How totally different from the city imagery (Rev. xxi. 10, &c., 24-26), which represents the condition of the righteous *after the Resurrection*, when, the body having been re-united to the soul, the activities of a new and glorified existence will commence! Doubtless the experiences of Paradise cannot be directly conveyed to us, as one said after having been caught away thither (2 Cor. xii. 4); but we may learn something of them "in a glass, darkly," through the medium of the inspired imagery.

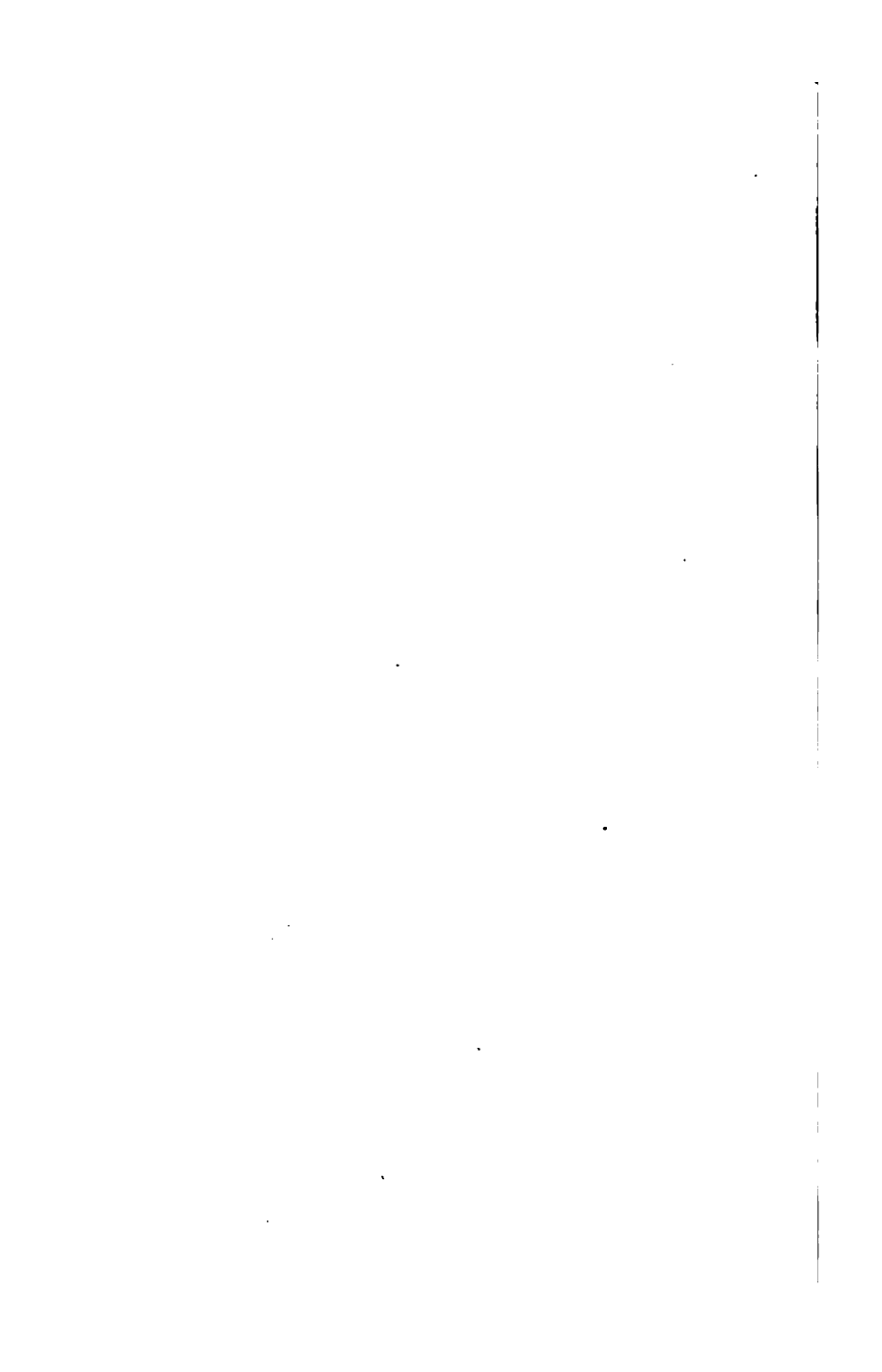
The second point is touched upon in chap. ix. Those who die in God's faith and fear are "with Christ" after their departure (Phil. i. 23 and Luke xxiii. 43), and have a much more intimate intercourse with Him than can be here enjoyed. We too are with Him, or rather perhaps He with us, in the exercises of private and public devotion, and specially (as pointed out in chap. x.) in the Sacrament of the Eucharist. By approaching

to *Him* then in these exercises we really (although spiritually) draw nigh to *them*, and obtain that nearness to them after which the sorrowing heart yearns; for it is impossible that two radii of a circle should approximate to the centre without at the same time approximating to one another.

May God teach some mourners, by means of this Manual, how to fulfil the precept which He gives by His holy apostle—"that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which are laid asleep through Jesus" (such is the true force of the original words, "who fell asleep, and now are asleep," to use a large paraphrase, "under the shadow and shelter of His mediation") "will God bring with Him." (1 Thess. iv. 13, 14.)

E. M. G.

DEANERY, NORWICH,  
*July 1st, 1880.*



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## CHAPTER I.

### Introduction.

"Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

1 THESS. iv. 18.

I THINK that all those who have been called by our heavenly Father to suffer the sad pain of bereavement, and have been comforted in their sorrow with the comfort He alone can give, must feel a longing to lead others who are tried in the same fiery furnace of affliction to the "waters of comfort" wherewith their own souls have been refreshed and sustained.

The subject of death is so deep and mysterious, that we naturally approach it with feelings of awe; and the more we meditate on it, the more we feel our own utter ignorance. We can only sink down humbled and amazed in that dread presence, and cry out in our weakness and helplessness, "It is the Lord! It is the Lord!"

Blessed indeed are they who from the heart can further say, "He doeth all things *well*."

I have tried to put together a few simple

thoughts which may help sorrowing hearts, not indeed to *understand* the deep mysteries of God's dealings with His people, but to *feel* the "comfort" wherewith He Himself is ready to comfort them, if in their trouble they go to Him for it.

These short meditations, with some verses of Scripture, and a hymn attached to each, may, I hope, give a little help to those who are striving earnestly against the inclination to give themselves up to "over much sorrow."

When the whole heart and being are so bowed down and oppressed with grief, it is difficult to apply oneself to searching out the many blessed words of hope and consolation, which our loving Father has provided in His own book for our comfort. We lie helpless beside the healing stream, for want of a friend to lead us into the pool, whose moving waters tell of the consoling presence of the angel of God.

Such a helping hand, though but a weak one, would I reach out by means of this little book to any waiting, longing soul; and if only *one* should find any help in its pages, it will not have been written in vain.

May the Lord, "Who is our Peace," be with us, and "comfort us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God."

“Jesus, Infinite Redeemer,  
Maker of this mighty frame,  
Teach, oh, teach us to remember  
What we are, and whence we came !

“Whence we come, and whither wending,  
Soon we must through darkness go,  
To inherit bliss unending,  
Or eternity of woe.”

## CHAPTER II.

### Our Helplessness. God's Omnipotence.

"The Lord hath taken away."—JOB i. 21.

"It is the Lord."—1 SAM. iii. 18.

"Be still, and know that I am God."—Ps. xli. 10.

NEVER surely do we realize our own utter weakness and helplessness more, than when the angel of death has visited our homes, and taken from our longing, loving eyes what seemed most dear to us of all our treasures, the one we felt we *could* never part with.

In the awful stillness and silence of his presence we are overwhelmed by the feeling that we can do nothing to resist him. It is all over. No prayers, no tears can avail us now. Nothing can bring our dear one back to life. All our love and care is useless now; he is gone. We can do no more. Our hearts sink with the terrible longing for *one* more look from the eyes that are closed; for *one* word from those dear lips for ever silent now. And as we look and long, a wave of sorrow surges over us, drowning for the moment every gleam of hope and comfort in our hearts.

Then in this our darkest moment may the thought come to us, "It is the Lord." "The *Lord* hath taken him away." And these blessed words lead us to look away from our own misery and helplessness, to Him from whom the blow has come.

He, the great God, our loving Father, Who "doth not willingly afflict," has sent this sorrow. None else but He, has power "to give" and "to take away." It is the Lord, the "giver of all good things," Who has visited us now. "And shall not the Judge of all the earth do *right*?"

In the first rush of this heavy wave of sorrow we are overwhelmed, we cannot *think*, we cannot *reason*; but let us say to ourselves again and again, "It is the Lord," and soon we shall begin to realize the blessed truth that we are not alone, that He is with us in our sorrow, and a stillness will come over the troubled waters of our souls, the storm of grief and rebellion against His decrees will cease, and there will be a calm.

"Were it not better to lie still,  
Let Him strike home and kiss the rod,  
Never so blest as when our will  
Yields undiscerned by all but God.

"The wanderer seeks his native bower,  
And we will look and long for Thee,  
And thank Thee for each trying hour,  
Wishing, not struggling, to be free."

KEBLE.

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## CHAPTER III.

### The Love of God.

"God is love."—1 JOHN iii. 8.

"As a father pitieth his own children, even so is the Lord merciful unto them that fear Him."—Ps. ciii. 13.

"The Father Himself loveth you."—JOHN xvi. 27.

WHEN the first passion of our grief has been calmed by our realizing that we are in the hands of God, and that He has sent the trial which is well-nigh breaking our hearts, we begin to cry to Him, "Why hast Thou thus dealt with us?" Why has the great and good God thus afflicted us? For what end is all this terrible suffering?

We ask these questions of our spirits, and seek in vain for an answer; and we are in danger of losing sight of the goodness and love of our heavenly Father, and of picturing Him to ourselves as a stern and unmerciful Judge, Who visits us in anger because of our many sins against Him.

Were it not far better to turn from these vain questions about God's dealings with us, which we cannot expect to understand, and set ourselves to meditate on His goodness and love, saying to our

faithless hearts again and again, "God is love." Whatever He ordains for us *must* be the thing that is really the *best* for us.

He *loves* us, therefore He *cannot* do anything to hurt us. Think of the pain we feel at the sight of suffering in those we love; and what is *our* love compared to *His*!

It is not given to us to "see as God sees;" but oh, let us trust His love!

We are so selfish in our grief. We forget that the dear one who is gone is dearer to His heavenly Father than to us, fondly as we loved Him; and is he not safer and infinitely more blessed in His Saviour's presence, than here on earth with us? God has given us an ever sure token of His love in sending His Son to live and die on earth for us. "Shall not He with Him also freely give us all things?"

Meditate on the love of God our Father, of God the Son, who gave even His life for us, and of God the Holy Ghost, who is "the Comforter."

"Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take,  
The clouds ye so much dread  
Are big with mercy, and shall break  
In blessings on your head.

"Judge not the Lord by feeble sense;  
But trust Him for His grace,  
Behind a frowning providence  
He hides a smiling face."

---

*THOUGHTS FOR MOURNERS.*

"But the Lord doth nought amiss,  
And since He hath ordered this,  
We have naught to do but still  
Rest in silence on His will.

"Many a heart no longer here,  
Ah ! was all too inly dear ;  
Yet, O Love, 'tis Thou dost call,  
Thou wilt be our all in all !"

---

"Fearest sometime that thy Father  
Hath forgot ?  
When the clouds around thee gather  
Doubt Him not.  
Always hath the daylight broken ;  
Always hath He comfort spoken ;  
Better hath He been for years  
Than thy fears.

"Therefore, whatsoe'er betideth,  
Night or day,  
Know His love for thee provideth  
Good alway ;  
Crown of sorrow gladly take,  
Grateful wear it for His sake ;  
Sweetly bending to His will,  
Lying still."

PAUL GERHARDT.

## CHAPTER IV.

### Vain Regrets.

"Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died."

JOHN xi. 21.

"I have seen, I have seen the affliction of My people."

ACTS vii. 34.

ALAS! alas! even when we are able, by the grace of God, to own His love in dealing with us, and to cling closely in our sorrow to Him, Who was a "Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief," we are too apt to add to our distress by indulging in so many *vain* regrets. We shed the bitterest of tears over opportunities lost. We torment ourselves by thinking, "*if only* we had had better advice," *if only* we had been aware of the danger, *if only* we had tried this or that remedy, *if only* we had prevented his going into the peril which proved fatal to him. A soul is racked by these miserable regrets, and is despoiled of its rest at the foot of the cross.

Even more terrible are the *self-reproaches* which arise out of these regrets. Oh, the aching of heart over a rough word hastily spoken! the bitterness of thinking how many things we might

have done to brighten the life that is ended now ! the longing wish, now so vain, that we had set him a better example, that we had done more for his soul's welfare while he was with us, that we had prayed more earnestly and more often for him !

Ah ! me. Ah ! me. Who that has lost a loved one does not know the exceeding bitterness of these regrets over the days that are gone ?

They are, I think, the most agonizing drop in all our cup of woe. But when we thus bemoan the past, where is our faith ?

Had God "forgotten to be gracious" in those days over which we mourn ? Had His "ever-present help" been at that time removed ? Was the Lord, who had promised to be with us "always," absent from us in our greatest time of need ?

Ah ! no. It *could* not be so. Every circumstance of that life that is gone, was ordered by our Father's loving care. He knew the pain and suffering ; He ordained the remedies we used ; He ordered the goings out and comings in of the loved one we have lost ; He noted, and His loving discipline permitted, every cloud that dimmed the brightness of that life.

Let us not say, "Lord, *if* Thou hadst been here." He *was* here. He *was* with the dear brother every moment of his life, and at his death. It were a

sin to doubt His watchful love, to think for a moment, that one so dear to *us* could have been, in his last trial, deserted by His Saviour.

"I have seen, I have seen the afflictions of My people." "I have seen his ways, and will heal him." "I have seen thy tears." "When thou wast under the fig-tree I saw thee." "Lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

Listen to these words of the Lord, and leave the past in His hands, "with Whom are the issues of life and death." "Here we see through a glass darkly;" but the day will come when all will be revealed, and "we shall know even as we are known."

"The childlike faith that asks not sight,  
Waits not for wonder nor for sign,  
Believes, because it loves, aright,  
Shall see things greater—things divine.

"Heaven to that gaze shall open wide,  
And brightest angels to and fro,  
On messages of love shall glide,  
"Twixt God above and man below."

---

KEBLE.

"As a little child relies  
On a care beyond his own ;  
Knows he's neither strong nor wise,  
Fears to stir a step alone ;  
Let me thus with Thee abide,  
As my Father, Guard, and Guide."

NEWTON.

## CHAPTER V.

### Prayer.

"I am so feeble that I cannot speak."

"He knoweth the secrets of the heart."—Ps. xliv. 21.

"The Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."—Rom. viii. 26.

"He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God."—Rom. viii. 27.

NOTHING is more distressing to the mind of a Christian than to find himself *unable*, as it were, to *pray* just at the very time when he most needs and longs for the help of God.

We see one dear to us sick unto death, and we know our *only* hope for his recovery is in the mercy of God, and yet we *cannot* pray. No words of prayer will come to our lips; our heart feels cold and dull, and so weighed down with anxiety and care, it *cannot* rise to heaven in prayer.

Is not this the feeling of every mourner in the first bitterness of his grief? He cannot speak to

God; he cannot pray; his soul seems dead and cold.

Do not let us fret over this weakness. If we have *faith* we must believe that God the Holy Spirit is "helping our infirmities" in our time of need, and that He does not allow us to make requests *against* the will of God.

Few thoughts are more comforting in times of great sorrow than this assurance, that even our prayers are in His hands; that though we "know not what we should pray for as we ought, the Spirit maketh intercession for us *according to the will of God.*"

How can we know that our prayers have not been answered? How can we tell what "comforts" may have "refreshed" the dear soul which is gone from us, in answer to our prayers, even when they seemed to us to be so dead and cold?

Therefore let us leave our prayers with all else, in our heavenly Father's hands, striving ever to say from our hearts, "Thy will be done."

"O Lord, how happy should we be  
If we would cast our care on Thee!  
If we from self could rest,  
And feel at heart that One above  
In perfect wisdom, perfect love,  
Is working for the best.

"Could we but kneel and cast our load,  
Even while we pray, upon our God;  
Then rise with lightened cheer,

Sure that the Father, who is nigh  
To still the famished raven's cry,  
Will hear in that we fear.

"Lord, make these faithless hearts of ours  
Such lessons learn from birds and flowers;  
Make them from self to cease :  
Leave all things to a Father's will,  
And taste, before Him lying still,  
Even in affliction, peace."

---

"I lay my prayer before Thee,  
And trusting in Thy word,  
Though all is silence in my heart,  
I know that Thou hast heard.  
To that blest city lead me, Lord,  
(Still choosing all my way,)  
Where faith melts into vision, as  
The starlight into day."

## CHAPTER VI.

### Memories of the Past.

"When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me."

PSALM xlii. 4.

"My heart panteth, my strength faileth me: as for the light of mine eyes, it is gone from me."—Ps. xxxviii. 10.

"My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever."—Ps. lxxviii. 26.

"When thou passeth through the waters, I will be with thee."

ISA. xliii. 2.

WHO has not felt the aching of heart with which we recall the looks and words of those who are gone, and dwell on the last scenes of those most precious lives?

When we would close our eyes in sleep, these sad memories come over us. When we wake in the morning, they are present with us.

Many are the bitter tears we shed over them, but we cannot shut them out; they haunt us every moment of the day; they disturb our prayers, they break down our self-control, they make us even murmur and rebel against our heavenly Father's will.

How can we drive away these brooding thoughts and longings? How can we veil those distressing scenes which memory is ever presenting to our weeping eyes?

One suggestion only can we make. Think of the Lord Jesus; turn to Him as these thoughts arise; call to Him to save you from them. Try to think of your Lord on the cross. Picture to yourself as vividly as you can that scene of the intensest woe the world has ever seen.

But you may be unable, in your weakness, to fix your aching eyes on any definite scene of the Saviour's life or death. Then try to think of *Him*; call to Him even aloud, as the wave of sorrowful memory sweeps over you, and you will find His gracious promise to be true: "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee."

As you realize His presence with you, thoughts of peace and joy will chase away the sad memories of the past, and in their place the golden rays of hope will shine on the soul, revealing visions of future joy, in the reunion hereafter of those now parted, and bright revelations of their present bliss in the immediate Presence of the Lord.

"Jesu, the very thought of Thee  
With sweetness fills the breast;  
But sweeter far Thy face to see,  
And in Thy presence rest.

"No voice can sing, no heart can frame,  
Nor can the memory find  
A sweeter sound than Jesus' name,  
The Saviour of mankind.

"O most sweet Jesu, hear the sighs  
Which unto Thee we send !  
To Thee our inmost spirit cries,  
To Thee our prayers ascend."

---

"That rushing flood I had no strength to meet,  
Nor power to flee : my present, future, past,  
Myself, my sorrow, and my sin I cast  
In utter helplessness at Jesu's feet :  
Then bend me to the storm if such His will.  
He saw the winds and waves,  
And whispered, 'Peace, be still,'"  
FRANCES RIDLEY HAVERGAL.

## CHAPTER VII.

### Loneliness in the Present.

"Seeing I have lost my children, and am desolate."

ISA. xlix. 21.

"I am left alone."—ROM. xi. 3.

"I have trodden the winepress alone."—ISA. lxiii. 3.

"Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God."—ISA. xli. 10.

WHAT sound is more sad to human ears than the word *alone*? Since the all-merciful declaration of God in Eden, "It is not good for man to be alone," our nature has shrunk with feelings of acutest suffering from *loneliness*, from the tearing asunder of the family ties which God has given us; and herein is the sharpest sting of death, that it parts us for ever in this world from those we love, and there remains only the vacant chair, the empty cot, to recall to us the loving companionship, the sweet presence of those who are gone.

Other companions we may have; but still the heart is desolate. No other can occupy that

vacant place, no other fill the aching void in our hearts. He is gone, and has left us alone.

Yet we are not alone; for there is "One among you whom ye know not"—One "who sticketh closer than a brother." He, the dear Lord, the Saviour of the world, is ever with us to comfort the sorrowing, to support the weak, to say to the troubled soul, "My peace I give unto you."

He "can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities;" for He has suffered too. He "trod the winepress alone." His friends "forsook Him, and fled." He too has wept beside the tomb.

Seek Him then in your loneliness, and you shall surely find Him; for He is ever near to bless those "who are of a troubled spirit."

None but He can fill the place of the dear one gone before; but in prayer and communion with Him the soul will be satisfied, and the heart will find rest.

"In this Thy bitter passion,  
Good Shepherd, think of me  
With Thy most sweet compassion,  
Unworthy though I be;  
Beneath Thy cross abiding,  
For ever would I rest,  
In Thy dear love confiding,  
And with Thy presence blest."

---

*THOUGHTS FOR MOURNERS.*

"When wounded sore, the stricken heart  
Lies bleeding and unbound ;  
One only hand, a piercèd hand,  
Can salve the sinner's wound.

"'Tis Jesus' blood that washes white,  
His hand that brings relief ;  
His heart is touched with all our joy,  
And feels for all our grief."

---

"Bear gently, suffer like a child,  
Nor be ashamed of tears ;  
Kiss the sweet cross, and in thy heart  
Sing of the eternal years."

FABER.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### Longing for further Knowledge.

"Oh that I knew."—JOB xxiii. 3.

"Now we see through a glass darkly."—1 COR. xiii. 12.

"But the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God."

WISDOM iii. 1.

"Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

JOHN xx. 29.

DEATH is unlike all other partings, in that we cannot even *in imagination* follow the departed spirit to its new home, nor picture to ourselves its employment, or even its actual *state*.

The life beyond the grave is shrouded in the deepest mystery. It has not pleased God to reveal to our mortal vision any of the blissful scenes of paradise. Of those who die in the Lord, we are assured only of their "presence with the Lord," and that their bodies will be caught up to "meet Him in the air," when He shall come again at the sound of the last trumpet.

But our hearts are ever craving and trying to pierce the cloud of mystery which enfolds the

present resting-place of the departed. Our faith is so weak that it cannot "hold fast" the "blessed hope" held out to us in the gospel, it cannot with childlike faith trust its dear ones to His safe keeping and loving care.

But let our hearts beat ever so wildly against the bars of ignorance which enclose them, they cannot escape. It is the Lord's will to hide these things from our eyes, and we must submit, only treasuring up the one precious declaration, "That it is far better" to "depart and to be with Christ."

It may be that if the state of the blessed departed were more fully revealed to us, we could not "run with *patience* the race set before us" here. Life would seem so undesirable compared with the future state, that in our eagerness to reach the goal, we should fail in the duties of our earthly pilgrimage.

Here we are to live *by faith*, and surely our faith must grow stronger as we think of those we have loved and lost, as "present with the Lord." Thoughts of them must draw us to thinking of Him with whom they now dwell, so may they even unconsciously be ever leading us nearer to Him.

"Seek not to look beyond the skies,  
To pierce heaven's deepest mysteries  
Not yet revealed to thee ;

Your toil for Christ shall bring you peace ;  
He said, ' The works ye do for these  
Ye do them unto me.'

" And when He calls your dear ones home,  
Oh, stand not gazing o'er the tomb,  
But trust His gracious word !  
' Who'e'er in me doth now believe,  
Though he were dead, yet shall he live  
For ever with his Lord.' "

L. C. S.

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" Lead, kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom  
Lead Thou me on ;  
The night is dark, and I am far from home,  
Lead Thou me on ;  
Keep Thou my feet ; I do not ask to see  
The distant scene, one step enough for me.

" So long Thy power hath blest me, sure it still  
Will lead me on  
O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till  
The night is gone ;  
And with the morn those angel faces smile,  
Which I have loved long since, and lost awhile."   
NEWMAN.

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" Thy God hath said 'tis good for thee  
To walk by faith and not by sight ;  
Take it on trust a little while,  
Soon shalt thou read the mystery right  
In the bright sunshine of His smile."   
KEBLE.

## CHAPTER IX.

### Communion with the Departed.

"Their works do follow them."—REV. xiv. 13.

"Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple."—REV. vii. 15.

"He being dead yet speaketh."—HEBREWS xi. 4.

THOUGH the separation between us, and those who have gone before to their rest, is so entire, yet there is a communion between their disembodied spirits, and ours which remain in our earthly tabernacles. They are at rest while we are toiling here.

They are perfectly happy, while we have still to bear the pains and sorrows of this life. They are free from sin, while we are hourly falling into divers temptations. They are occupied in a ceaseless service of praise and adoration, while we are so distracted "with cares, or riches, or pleasures," of this life, that it seems well-nigh impossible to devote one short hour of our busy, bustling days, to the worship of God.

What communion can there be then between their "light" and our "darkness"? What fellowship between us who live on earth, and those who have passed into the "land that is very far off"?

There are two ways in which we may enjoy such communion, deep and mysterious as it must ever be. One way is by joining them in worship, the other by trying to *follow their example* in serving God.

The saints in Paradise, we know, "rest not day or night," from their constant song of praise; therefore, when we kneel before the throne of grace, and offer our feeble service of prayer, of praise, and thanksgiving, we can think of those who are gone, as associated with us in these highest acts of our lives, and so will they seem near to us, though our mortal eyes discern them not.

Also will they seem to be with us in our efforts after the life of holiness and patience, which the grace of God enabled them to lead. Sweet memories of their *patience*, or *holiness*, or *gentleness*, and *humility*; of their *unselfishness*, their *earnestness*, their *devotion to good works* here, their *delight in the worship* of the earthly sanctuary; these and other bright recollections of our loved companion's life with us, will come over our souls in hours of temptation and trial, like sweet voices from the spirit-world, whispering in our ears words of hope and comfort, to cheer us in our weary conflict with sin, the world, and the flesh, bidding us look up and be brave; for the time is short, and our rest is at hand. So "he being dead yet speaketh," and "their works do follow them."

"In thy far away dwelling, wherever it be,  
I believe thou hast visions of mine ;  
And the love that made all things music to me  
I yet have not learnt to resign.  
In the hush of the night, in the waste of the sea,  
Or alone with the breeze on the hill,  
I have ever a presence that whispers of thee,  
And my spirit lies down, and is still.  
"Mine eye must be dark that so long has been dimmed  
Ere again it may gaze upon thine ;  
But my heart has revealings of thee and thy home  
In many a token and sign.  
I never look up with a vow to the sky  
But a light like thy beauty is there ;  
And I hear a low murmur like thine ever nigh  
When I pour out my spirit in prayer."

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HERVEY.

"One in all we seek or shun,  
One because our Lord is one ;  
One in heart, and one in love,  
We below, and they above.  
"Now in sacrament and prayer  
Each with other hath a share ;  
Hath a share in tear and sigh,  
Watch, and fast, and litany.  
"With each other join they here,  
In affliction, doubt, and fear,  
That hereafter they may be  
Joined, O Lord, in bliss with Thee."  

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"Still may his mild rebuking stand  
Between us and the wrong,  
And his dear memory serve to make  
Our faith in goodness strong."

## CHAPTER X.

### Consolation in the Holy Eucharist.

"Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."—MATT. xi. 28.

"Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you."

JAMES iv. 8.

"He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him."—JOHN vi. 56.

"My Beloved is mine, and I am His."—CANT. ii. 16.

THE subject of this chapter is very closely united with the last one, indeed with almost all the preceding ones ; for as our only source of consolation, look at it as we will, is in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the realization of His presence with us, in the assurance of His forgiveness of our sins, in the promise of His feeling for us in all our tribulation, in the blessed hope of His appearing in glory ; so it is certain we can in no way come so closely to Him, and so firmly take hold of all the blessed comforts His presence gives us, as in the way He has Himself appointed—the Blessed Sacrament of His most precious Body and Blood.

We have, in a former meditation, considered our

utter helplessness in the time of bereavement, the feeling, so overpowering to human nature, that we can *do nothing*, that no help is of any avail now. Then in our helplessness let us learn *obedience*; let us try to do simply what the Lord has told us to do, without doubting that the blessing He has promised will come through the means He has appointed.

Even if we could understand less than we now can know, of the deep mystery of the Blessed Sacrament, we should come to It in our sorrow, as a suffering child will seek the refuge of its mother's arms, in unreasoning love and trust; but it has pleased our heavenly Father to give to our finite understandings *reasons* for the act He commands.

In It we are to find pardon for our sins, strength to persevere, and the peace which God alone can give, in a word, Life, the Life which is in Him.

Shall we not then in It be comforted by God, even when suffering the pain so hard to bear, of bereavement?

The more we can, by the help of God the Holy Spirit, realize the presence of our blessed Saviour in our "midst," the more *real* will be to us the unseen world in which our dear ones dwell with Him; and surely our sorrowing hearts must be raised to some participation of *their* joy, as we join in our Eucharistic anthem "with angels and

archangels, and with all the company of heaven,"  
in grateful ascription of praise to the Ever Blessed  
Trinity.

"O Food that weary pilgrims love!  
O Bread of angel hosts above!  
O Manna of the saints!  
The hungry soul would feed on Thee;  
Ne'er may the heart unsolaced be  
Which for Thy sweetness faints."

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"Bread of heaven, on Thee we feed;  
For Thy flesh is meat indeed:  
Ever may our souls be fed  
With this true and living Bread;  
Day by day with strength supplied  
Through the life of Him who died.

"Vine of heaven, Thy blood supplies  
This blest cup of sacrifice;  
Lord, Thy wounds our healing give;  
To Thy cross we look and live:  
Jesu, may we ever be  
Grafted, rooted, built in Thee."

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"Jesu, of Thee shall be my song;  
To Thee my heart and life belong;  
All that I have or am is Thine,  
And Thou, blest Saviour, Thou art mine:  
Jesu, my Lord, I Thee adore;  
Oh, make me love Thee more and more!"

## CHAPTER XI.

### Consolation in Work.

“Be ye therefore steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.”—1 COR. xv. 58.

“Lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees.”  
HEB. xii. 12.

“Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears: for thy work shall be rewarded, saith the Lord.”

JER. xxxi. 16.

“Let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to Him in well-doing.”

1 PETER iv. 19.

WE are too apt to look upon the work God has given us to do in this world as a trial and care to us, especially when with aching hearts we go mourning all the day long, and feel no strength or energy to do the duties that are given us to do.

But the Lord, “who knows us, and loves us better than He knows,” has ordered it so.

The staff and prop of our home is gone—the one on whom we leant for support after the labours of the day were over—he who was ever ready to soothe us in our weariness and pain, to give us

good counsel in times of doubt and difficulty, to cheer us on our heavenward way, both by precept and example—he has gone from our midst; and like as the ivy, when the tree falls to which its tendrils clung, lies a helpless, tangled mass around its broken stay, so we lie wounded, helpless, all unstrung, by the grave of him we loved.

Or it may be, the special *brightness* of the house is gone; the graceful, tender presence, that lent a peculiar sweetness to the commonest acts of life; the sweet voice ever ready with kind and soothing words; the ready sympathizer in trouble and in joy; the gentle nurse in sickness; the fond and loving mother—the child whose early promise had created in our hearts, the brightest visions of a manhood showing all the bright virtues of his early days, whom we did not recognize as ready for His Master's call; or the little unconscious infant who was lent to us only as one bright transient gleam of light from heaven, here to-day and gone to-morrow, leaving us in darkness, the more intense, from the brightness of the vanished beam.

In such an hour who can work? Yet there is the work which *must* be done; the ordinary duties of the day, usually so trivial, but now who knows how hard, cannot be neglected.

The father of the family has bequeathed to us who remain, the cares of his business, the training

of his children, the carrying on of his good works of charity and love. The mother has left to us the care and nurture of the little ones she sorrowed most to leave. The child who is gone, has given us a work to do in training his brothers and sisters to follow in his steps, that we may all join him where he is gone ; and even the little babe has left us a weeping mother to comfort and console, and a work to do to train and discipline our earthly affections, that we may attain to the heavenly purity of the land where his infant spirit dwells.

So the Lord calls us, even in our bereaved and broken state, to be "up and doing," to work while it is day. He never requires of our feeble nature, more than He gives us strength to do, and if we obey Him, and *patiently*, if not cheerfully, set ourselves at once to do the work that lies before us, we shall find in it a hidden angel of consolation and comfort, in our grief.

It may seem strange, but it is true, that the harder, the more menial the work we have to do, the better is it for our spirits, which are so much wont to pine and brood over their trouble, instead of bravely looking up, even through a mist of tears, to the Sun of Righteousness, Whose bright beams are ever shining beyond the clouds which overshadow us. Our loving Saviour, when He sees us feebly trying to run with patience our

"daily round" of work, will surely come to us  
 "with healing in His wings," and His blessed  
 greeting will sound in our ears, "Well done, thou  
 good and faithful servant." "I know thy works,  
 and thy labour, and thy patience." "I will give  
 thee rest."

"If on our daily course our mind  
 Be set to hallow all we find,  
 New treasures still of countless price  
 God will provide for sacrifice.

"The trivial round, the common talk,  
 Will furnish all we ought to ask ;  
 Room to deny ourselves, a road  
 To bring us daily nearer God.

"Seek we no more, content with these,  
 Let present rapture, comfort, ease,  
 As heaven shall bid them, come and go,  
 The secret this of rest below."      **KEBLE.**

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"They who in appointed duty  
 Live most secretly with God,  
 Shall come forth in fullest beauty,  
 Blossoming like Aaron's rod :  
 Plants can flourish in the dark, .  
 If within the golden ark."

## CHAPTER XII.

### The Hope of Reunion.

"I shall go to him ; but he shall not return to me."

2 SAM. xii. 23.

"Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil."

HEB. vi. 19.

"But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and Church of the First-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of a better covenant."

HEB. xii. 22-24.

WHAT comfort, what real consolation, could we find in any of our thoughts on the state of the dead in Christ, had we no hope of ever meeting them and recognizing them again ?

If our parting on this side of the grave with those we love is to be final, then indeed is it impossible to take away from death its sting, then is the grave victorious, and we may sorrow as those that have no hope.

But thanks be to God, Who giveth us the

victory through our Lord Jesus Christ, He has brought "life and immortality to light;" He has risen from the dead, "the first-fruits of them that sleep."

He appeared on earth after His resurrection to convince us of the ever blessed truth, that "as He died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him.

Who can realize the joy of that supreme moment, when those so long parted shall meet in the full radiance of the glorious Presence of Him Who has guided them through all the perils of their earthly pilgrimage, and has "received them into glory"?

Our hearts, so prone to sin, are too feeble to soar to the contemplation of the blessed communion between those now reunited who have been washed from all their sins, and made "white in the blood of the Lamb," and clad in His robes of perfect righteousness.

No more sin, no more sorrow, no more pain shall cloud their happy intercourse; no more doubt, or distrust, or fear; for then shall they "know even as also they are known."

The Lord, Whom on earth they sought mid clouds and darkness, "if haply they might feel after Him and find Him," is visibly present in their midst, and their longing souls "shall be satisfied," "for they shall be like Him."

The time is short. "Be patient therefore,

brethren, unto the coming of the Lord." "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted."

"Then pass, ye mourners, cheerily on,  
Through prayers unto the tomb;  
Still, as ye watch life's falling leaf,  
Gathering from every loss and grief  
Hope of new spring and endless home."

KEBLE.

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"Short be your strife, your triumph full,  
Till every heart have caught your flame,  
And, lightened of the world's misrule,  
Ye love those elder saints to greet,  
Gathered long since at Jesus' feet:  
No world of passions to destroy,  
Your prayers and struggles o'er,  
Your task all praise and joy."

KEBLE.

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"Oh, what the joy and the glory must be,  
Those endless sabbaths the blessed ones see!  
Crowns for the valiant, to weary ones rest,  
God shall be all, and in all ever blest."

